

ABSTRACT

A method and apparatus are provided for creating a virtual hierarchical local area network. The method and apparatus provide a hierarchical framing technique that allows a network architecture to realize a local area network hierarchy within the

5 network. In this manner, a first local area network hierarchy is defined by communication in a first frame format between a first set of network devices and a second set of network devices. A second local area network hierarchy is defined by communication in a second frame format between members of the second set of network devices. The second frame format includes the fields of a frame in the first

10 frame format that is used to communicate between the first set of communication devices and the second set of communication devices.